



March 3, 2015

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
Chairman, House Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of the Representatives
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Conyers
Ranking Member, House Committee on the Judiciary
U.S. House of the Representatives
B-351 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Goodlatte, Ranking Member Conyers and members of the committee,

On behalf of the National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB), the nation's leading small business advocacy organization, I'm writing to express our support for H.R. 1147, *the Legal Workforce Act of 2015*. NFIB is especially grateful to Chairmen Goodlatte, Smith and Chabot for addressing small employers' concerns, enumerated below, as they pertain to a mandatory E-Verify system.

NFIB members support making an E-Verify system mandatory, increasing penalties on employers who knowingly hire illegal workers, and allowing state officials to enforce federal immigration law. H.R. 1147 would accomplish all three of these goals while striking a fair balance between increased enforcement and limiting the regulatory burdens placed on small employers. NFIB also appreciates the inclusion of the safe harbor provision, ensuring that small employers are protected from erroneous information given by the E-Verify system.

Over the course of the last decade, NFIB has advocated for a four year phase-in of the E-Verify system for all employers, as well as a mitigating fine structure for smaller employers. NFIB is strongly supportive of new language in the underlying bill that addresses both of these requests. H.R. 1147 includes language that would extend a previous two year phase-in of the E-Verify system to a potential three year phase-in. NFIB considers this an acceptable compromise. Likewise, H.R. 1147 would direct the Secretary of Homeland Security to take into account the size of a business when assessing civil penalties. NFIB believes this is the best compromise language to protect smaller employers, while being assessed fines under the same structure that would be applied to larger businesses.

Again, thank you for keeping small business in mind as you mark-up H.R. 1147. NFIB has a long history of supporting mandatory E-Verify for all businesses, and expect to continue our support for H.R. 1147 after it is reported favorably out of the Judiciary Committee. We look forward to working with you on this important issue as the 114th Congress continues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amanda Austin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and a stylized "A" at the end.

Amanda Austin
Vice President
Public Policy